

Recruitment Team Training & Process Enhancement

Recruitment Process Enhancement

The last step in the recruitment cycle is to reflect on your process and work to make it better the next time around. Your recruitment plan should include goals and benchmarks that you can track your progress against. Review your overall strategy annually or as needed. Remember, once the plan is complete, don't feel like it's set in stone. You may find that some of your approaches work better than others, and your plan should be revised accordingly. Just remember to formally schedule these reviews the way you would any other important program task.

Use the following activities to evaluate your recruitment process.

Talk to your current and former VISTAs:

- How did you hear about our VISTA position(s)?
- What enticed you to pursue service with us?
- What could we have done better during the recruitment process?
- If you were in charge of recruiting VISTA candidates, how would you reach them?

Evaluate your recruitment messaging:

- Is your recruitment message accurate, brief, and clear?
- Does it include a clear description of your VISTA position(s)?
- Does it use terms that will encourage and persuade individuals to become VISTAs at your organization?

Identify which recruitment avenues are most effective:

- Track where applicants hear about your positions (e.g., Craigslist, Idealist.org, referrals from other agencies, outreach at community events, etc.).
- Note which avenues bring you the highest number of qualified applicants.
- Focus your efforts on those avenues in the future.

Adapted from: *Effective Mentor Recruitment: Get Organized, Getting Results*

Recruitment Team Training

Intermediaries, or large projects, that have a team process for recruitment can learn from other projects that have organized similar processes to find the best VISTAs. If you are sending members to similar sites with similar assignments, it makes sense to recruit the best possible cohort of VISTAs and then match them to sites. However, if the individual projects and VADs vary across your placement sites, it's better to actively involve the sub-sites in recruiting their members. That way, there's a better chance that sites will find VISTAs with interests and skills that match their specific needs.

Sample Models

Intermediary Sponsors Recruit Directly

Suggested use: When placement sites and member assignments are similar.

Sample process:

- Recruit a cohort of VISTA candidates.
- Provide sub-sites with the candidates' My AmeriCorps applications and other supplemental materials such as resumes and answers to essay questions. Ask each sub-site to rank its top-5 candidates and send you these rankings.
- Provide the candidates with information on the sites, as well as the proposed VAD(s). During this "matching period," there might be opportunities for candidates to tour the placement sites that most appeal to them. Ask the candidates to rank their top-5 preferred placements.
- Allocate member positions and wait for the CNCS State Office to approve VADs.
- Once you've gathered the rankings from both the sub-sites and the candidates, use them to help determine who goes where. Try to match as many top choices as possible. You might create a spreadsheet with candidates' names in columns and sites in rows to graphically organize your data.

Sponsors Ask Sub-Sites to Recruit

Suggested use: When individual projects and VADs vary across your placement sites.

Sample process:

- Sub-sites submit applications and proposed VADs to the VISTA sponsoring organization.
- The sponsoring organization allocates member positions and the CNCS State Office approves VADs.
- Sub-sites identify and recruit VISTA candidates.
- Sub-sites conduct initial interviews with eligible candidates.
- Sub-sites instruct candidates to schedule appointments with the sponsoring organization to complete paperwork and participate in final interviews.

- The sponsoring organization approves the member site placements and forwards them to the State Office for final approval.
- Once placements are approved by the State Office, the sponsoring organization formally offers the positions to the selected candidates.

Hybrid Model

Sample process:

- Intermediary organization conducts marketing, then screens and interviews candidates to create an applicant pool for second interviews.
- Sub-sites conduct second interviews and choose their top picks.
- Intermediary and sub-sites work together to finalize lists of candidates.
- Once candidates are selected, sub-sites and intermediary work together to identify "best fit" placements for them.

Tips for Intermediaries:

- Get official buy-in from sub-sites to help with recruitment as a way to successfully secure a member of their choosing. You can build this into your Memoranda of Understanding with the sub-sites.
- Provide sub-sites with recruitment materials, application packets, and brochures.
- Offer trainings on recruitment and interviewing strategies for the sub-sites.
- Point out or forward to sub-site supervisors the recruitment resources found on the VISTA Campus.
- Develop support networks for sub-sites by having multiple sites in a community or region work together as a "cluster" that can pool recruitment efforts.
- While it's a great idea to involve sites in recruiting, it's also helpful for the intermediary to handle e-Grants and all the member paperwork.
- Post position descriptions on the My AmeriCorps portal individually, with a different post for each site. Close down postings that receive a large number of applications. You can then focus your energy on the positions drawing less traffic.
- Create and post position descriptions several months before the start date for your VISTAs. In many cases, placement sites will want to interview top candidates more than once, and you may want to conduct your own interviews to ensure candidates have the qualifications and mindset needed to succeed as VISTAs.
- During boom years, there will be substantially more applicants than slots, and it's not always feasible to follow up with everyone who isn't selected. When unsuccessful candidates reach out to you, it's a good sign that they are enthusiastic about VISTA. You might suggest open positions at other organizations in your community, region, or state.